

# How Lee Nong Bought His 11-Year-Old-Bride For \$700.

**An Unusual Photograph of Opium Smokers in the Grip of Their Wicked Habit.**

**Amid Such Scenes as This the Child-Wife Was Reared and from Them Has Now Been Rescued.**



**Little Anna Wore-Nong in the "Wedding Jacket" She Wore When Married to the Chinaman Who Had Bought Her.**



**Little Anna, the Child-Bride Whose Foster Mother Sold Her for \$700.**

**I**N supposedly civilized America an old Chinaman has just bought the eleven-year-old daughter of a white woman for \$700. The child has been rescued by the Young Women's Christian Association and is now awaiting motherhood. The marriage will, of course, be annulled. What can never be annulled is the effect upon this little bride's mind and body and life of her slavery.

It is rarely that, like a lurid flash from hidden depths, there comes an experience which seemingly shows how thin is the crust of the civilization the white believe so impregnable. Not always do these flashes come from that strata of life called the Underworld; often they show what little distance there may be between those who move through presumably the upperworld and those of the submerged—the world of the vicious, the criminal, the depraved and the ignorant.

No more tragic chapter of that underworld has ever been revealed than the sale of this child by her foster mother to the yellow owner of a chop suey house in Binghamton, N. Y.

This foster mother shows unmistakable traces of breeding. She has education. She claims to be of English and Greek descent. She says that she "fell in with the Chinese in London"—in that picturesque and mysterious colony that clusters about Limehouse. She is good looking and well dressed. She gives her name as Mrs. Marie Wore. The child's name is Anna Michaelson, and according to those who found her she is supposed to be the daughter of a Mr. and Mrs. Morris Michaelson, and was taken from the New York Foundling Asylum just after her birth and adopted by Mrs. Wore.

It may be that she is the child's own mother, for there is evidence that she herself was known as Mrs. Morris Michaelson and the girl and she have a marked resemblance. If this is so her wicked act becomes even blacker.

There is certainly Chinese blood in the child bride. The marks are unmistakable. The big black eyes are almond shaped, the hair betrays the Chinese, and the clear, olive complexion has in it a shadow of the yellow.

Mrs. Wore is under arrest in Binghamton and is in the city jail.

If the girl's story is true, it was her foster mother's cupidity that caused her to overreach herself and to precipitate the exposure. After selling the child to Lee

## **A Sad Chapter of Life in the Underworld Revealed When the Weary Little Child-Wife, Wandering, Lost and Weeping About the Great Railroad Station, Found At Last a Release from Slavery to the Yellow Man Who Had Bought Her**

influence of this tong, she claimed, in London, and she has never since been able to obtain her freedom.

"You doubt me," she cried to those who listened to her story. "Look at this!"

She rolled up the sleeve of her waist. Upon the skin were the marks of cuts, long, red scars.

"They are just a few dagger wounds," she said. "They are the work of the tong. Once I talked and this is the way they punished me."

"I did what they told me to do. I was doped. When I went before the minister I was not myself. I had nothing to do with the marriage. The society directed it. I was a fool—just a poor fool."

"At heart I am a good woman. My heart has yearned for a child of my own. I have a child in China. The tong kept it from me, and the day that the marriage license was obtained and the day that little Anna became the wife of Lee Nong, I was so full of opium that I did not know what I was doing."

Afterwards she said that she was the wife of a Chinaman named Chin Wore, who, according to her, was electrocuted in Boston for being connected with a murder done by a gang of Chinese hatchet men approximately fourteen years ago.

The authorities, however, declare that they have found her to be guilty of acts unspeakable in her years of relationship with the yellow men in this country and abroad, and that she legally adopted little Anna for no other reason than to use the girl as a tool to extort money from her Chinese friends.

Annie was taken to Binghamton last year and was married to Lee Nong by the Rev. T. Valentine Parker, a Baptist minister, after a city judge had refused to perform the ceremony. The minister was misled, having acted only when told that the girl was over sixteen and about to become a mother.

The police also say Chin Wore, supposed to have paid with his life for his crimes, was in Binghamton on the night the woman was arrested and that, due to a warning received through some mysterious channel and from some unidentified person in New York, the man whom she declares is her husband fled the city but a scant half hour before the police took Mrs. Wore in custody. They have unearthed evidence showing that David Lee Nong, as a part of the bargain whereby Mrs. Wore was to turn over the little girl to him as his wife, paid Mrs. Wore and her yellow husband \$450 with which to buy a laundry a short distance from the chop suey resort owned by Nong, and that Chin Wore was in the laundry the night Mrs. Wore was arrested, and that it was here that he received the mysterious warning that caused him to flee from the city.

They also declare that David Lee Nong, as a part of the marriage bargain, paid about \$200 to cover the cost of transporting Mrs. Wore's furniture to Binghamton, and that he spent about \$100 more in buying the woman new clothes.

All this was part of the price for little Anna.

According to Miss Banta, she has known Mrs. Wore since the Fall of 1915. At this time, the missionary declares, she received a call from the Chinese Emigration Bureau in New York for information concerning Mrs. Wore, who was declared to have made application for passports for three half-breed children to take them out of the country. It is declared that she had taken the children from the New York Foundling Hospital on probation adoption. The investigation conducted by Miss Banta resulted in the return of two of the children, but Mrs. Wore heard of the probe being made into her life and dropped out of sight after she had succeeded in legally becoming the mother of Anna, the third child.

She was next heard of at High Bridge, New York. Investigation into how the woman supported herself disclosed the fact that she was known as "the woman of mystery" even among the frequenters of Chinatown's underworld. Mrs. Wore learned that her presence at High Bridge had been ascertained and she again dropped out of sight. The next heard of her was in Worcester, Mass., where she had moved and taken little Anna with her. While she was living at High Bridge she received many mysterious visits from a large number of Orientals.

Mrs. Wore is then declared to have left the little girl in Worcester and have come to Binghamton, where she immediately began to associate with David Lee Nong and Lee Jim, his partner in the chop suey house. It was soon after her arrival here that the bargain to turn little Anna over to the Chinaman was made, and Mrs. Wore returned to bring the girl to that city. She returned to Binghamton on November 20 with Anna, and it was on this day that the Chinaman and the child, accompanied by Mrs. Wore, were married by the Rev. T. Valentine Parker, after they had been ordered from the courtroom by City Judge Harold L. Hart, who became suspicious of the child's age, and to whom they had come with a request that he tie the nuptial knot.

It is at this stage of this strange drama that the authorities declare Mrs. Wore's actions indicate that she used the little girl as a tool to extort money from David Lee Nong. The straightforward story told by Anna to the police has disclosed the fact that Mrs. Wore succeeded on at least two occasions in inducing her to run away from her yellow husband in order that Mrs. Wore might obtain more money from Nong on the pretext that she needed the money to buy clothing for the child, and also to bring his child-wife back to him. It was on the last occasion that Mrs. Wore worked her scheme, with the result that the case again was called to the attention of Miss Banta, and the investigation followed which landed Mrs. Wore behind the bars.

The foster mother induced the child-wife to run away again to New York,

where the woman telegraphed another Chinese to meet her at the station and care for her until Mrs. Wore called for her again. She instructed Anna as to what telegrams to send to Nong in Binghamton, requesting money for various purposes.

This time, as though Providence had intervened, the waiting Chinaman did not appear. Unfamiliar with her surroundings, Anna began to wander and so attracted the attention of a woman agent of the Travelers' Aid Society, who took her to the mission, where she was turned over to Miss Banta.

Miss Banta immediately recognized the child, who told her the tragic story of the life she had been compelled to lead. It was upon this information that the authorities in Binghamton were communicated with, started the investigation which resulted in the arrest of Mrs. Wore on the charge of abduction.

In one of the rooms of the Y. W. C. A. in Binghamton is the little girl, her hair, childlike, down her back and she enjoying the first happy hours of her life as she clutches a doll to her immature body.

To the north, less than a block from the room in the Y. W. C. A., occupied by little Anna, David Lee Nong moves among the tables of his chop suey restaurant.

"Me velly sorry," Lee Nong told the police. "Me take 'er back. Me sign papers. Me honest. All tell lies but me. She my wife. Me marry her. Me buy Chin Wore laundry for 'er. Me no buy her." And then the Oriental dropped his head into his hands and weaved from side to side.

"Mama told me she'd do awful things to me if I didn't marry the Chinaman," declared little Anna. "She told me she'd found a nice rich man for me to marry. I didn't want to marry him and I cried. She told me if I didn't stop crying and do as she said she would take me to New York and put me in some hateful institution. She told me he had a lot of money and that I wouldn't have to live with him only just long enough to get all his money, and then she and I would run away from him."



**David Lee Nong, the Husband and Wife Buyer.**

